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FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9804
RUEHC/DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC IMMEDIATE
INFO RUCPDOG/USDOC WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 3417
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 2913
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 1559
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 8550
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 6787
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 9192
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 000424

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/INS AND DRL/ILCSR FOR MARK MITTLEHAUSER
STATE FOR G/TIP STEVE STEINER
DOL/ILAB FOR LEYLA STROTKAMP

E.O 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EIND](#) [ELAB](#) [ETRD](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [CE](#)

SUBJECT: SRI LANKA: INFORMATION ON FORCED LABOR AND EXPLOITATIVE
CHILD LABOR IN THE PRODUCTION OF GOODS FOR MANDATORY CONGRESSIONAL
REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

REF: (a) STATE 21472
(b) COLOMBO 63

¶1. (U) Summary: Post is not aware of forced labor in the production
of goods in Sri Lanka. Exploitative child labor may exist in the
brick industry. Children working in the fireworks industry work at
home and are engaged in non-hazardous forms of work. End Summary.

Forced Labor

¶2. (U) Forced Labor: Post is not aware of forced labor or forced
child labor in the production of goods in Sri Lanka.

Exploitative child labor

¶3. (SBU) Good: Bricks

-(Note: The SBU classification on this paragraph relates only to
discussion of the unreleased list of hazardous forms of child labor.
End note.)

-Type of exploitation found in the production of good: hazardous
form of child labor with children being exposed to dust, lifting of
heavy weights, and kiln work.

-Sources of information: Report on Child Labor in Agriculture
Sector (ROCLA), implemented by Social Policy Analysis & Research
Center, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka for ILO-IPEC (March 2008),
as well as field researchers who conducted this study.

-Brick manufacturing is listed as a hazardous form of child labor in
the "list of hazardous forms of child labor" adopted by the National
Labor Advisory Council; this list, created in 2004, has not been
officially released. The list identifies ergonomic problems,
exposure to dust, and accidents as hazards in brick making and
recommends conditional prohibition of child labor in the industry.

-ROCLA reports that children employed in brick making were exposed
to dust. The report does not provide further information regarding
children in the brick industry. According to a member of the

research team, in the surveyed areas, the brick industry is a family-based, non-formal industry. The entire family tends to be involved in the industry. They observed children carrying heavy loads and working in kilns, in addition to being exposed to dust.

-Incidence: ROCLA covered three agricultural districts in Sri Lanka and reported few incidences of children below 18 years being employed in brick making. In the two districts of Monaragala and Polonnaruwa, where the report is based on a limited sample survey, only 18 child laborers (in all industries) were found in a randomly selected sample of 600 households, or a child labor incidence of 3%.

The survey found no children working in the brick industry in Monaragala district. In Polonnaruwa district only 6.7% of the working children were engaged in brick making. There was no sample survey in Ampara district.

-ROCLA did not do an in-depth study of children in the brick industry. Post is not aware of recent studies on child labor in the brick industry.

14. (U) Good: Fireworks

-Type of exploitation found in the production of good: possible exposure to gun powder and chemicals.

-Sources of information: Situation Report on Child Labor (Fireworks) implemented by the Social Policy Analysis & Research Center, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka for ILO-IPEC (2008) and field researchers of this study.

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-Employment of children in the fireworks industry is categorized as a hazardous form of child labor in the "list of hazardous forms of child labor" adopted by the National Labor Advisory Council, which has not been officially released. Fire and explosion risk and exposure to chemicals are categorized as hazards in the industry.

-The Situation Report on Child Labor (Fireworks) implemented by the Social Policy Analysis & Research Center, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka for ILO-IPEC (2008), which covered child labor in the fireworks industry in two of the three districts where the fireworks industry is concentrated, did not find hazardous forms of child labor in the industry. The study was based on a household survey and case studies. Activities that are not considered risky, such as preparation of paper or cardboard cases for firecrackers, are done at the household level. Hazardous work such as filling the firecracker cases with gun powder is done at factories. There were no reports of employment of children at fireworks factories.

-However, the study reports that during festive seasons employers put up temporary work stations or "cracker huts" and encourage children to work in these huts. While the report does not elaborate on the kind of work done in cracker huts, a member of the research team said they believe that the entire process of firecracker production is done in cracker huts, including filling cardboard with gun powder and chemicals. As such, children who go to work in cracker huts face the risk of exposure to various hazards. The research team was not allowed inside cracker huts.

-Incidence: The study on child labor in the fireworks industry was done in two of the three districts where the fireworks industry is concentrated. The industry is limited to certain villages in these districts; the surveys were done in those villages. The survey found a total of 29 children employed in the fireworks industry out of a total of 185 children aged 5-17 living in the surveyed households. Out of these 29 children, 24 were students and hence classified as part-time employees. All the 29 children were working at home.

-The research team noted that a survey of firework factories would have been better to study the issue of child labor in the firework industry.

15. (U) Host government efforts to combat exploitative child labor:

The government of Sri Lanka's National Labor Advisory Council has adopted a list of hazardous forms of child labor. The government is in the process of restricting or prohibiting child labor in the selected industries. For further details please see ref (b).

16. (U) Post has e-mailed copies of the following reports to Charita Castro and Leyla Strotkap:

- Report on Child Labor in Agriculture Sector (ROCLA), implemented by Social Policy Analysis & Research Center, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka for ILO-IPEC (March 2008)
- Situation Report on Child Labor (Fireworks) implemented by the Social Policy Analysis & Research Center, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka for ILO-IPEC
- List of hazardous forms of child labor adopted by the National Labor Advisory Council.

BLAKE